



# The Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta

Accountable, proactive and  
responsible environmental  
stewardship

# Who We Are

- A partnership of government, industry and public stakeholders
- Established in 2008 to proactively address agri-environmental issues
- A consensus-based forum for discussion of agri-environmental policy issues
- A unified voice providing advice and input into policy development

# Our Purpose

## Vision

Alberta's agriculture industry is profitable, accountable and recognized for its pro-active, responsible environmental stewardship.

## Mission

The AEPA is an inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnership of government, industry and public stakeholders working together to proactively address agri-environmental issues from a policy perspective.

# Our Partners

- Livestock Industry Groups
- Cropping Industry Groups
- Environmental Non-Government Organizations
- Government
- Others



# What We Do

## Strategic Priorities

- Engage in land-use, water, and agri-environmental policy development.
- Provide policy input on innovations and business models that will help the agriculture industry achieve AEPA desired outcomes.
- Engage and build understanding among our partners to enable the agriculture industry to be a credible contributor to agri-environmental policy development.

# How We Work

- Regular Board meetings and supporting committees
- Project teams
- Forums and topical workshops
- Other publications, communications and outreach efforts

# Land-use Framework Advisory Team

- Developed key messages on priority land-use planning issues

## **Overarching AEPA Land-Use Planning Key Message**

Early and continued engagement with policy makers is critical to ensure agricultural interests are reflected in Alberta's land-use planning. It is important to fully understand the impacts of topics such as cumulative effects management, water quality and quantity, and ecosystem services on the agriculture industry. The desired outcome of land-use planning is for the industry to have the ability to expand and operate in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

# Expected Land-use Planning Outcomes

- The agriculture industry supports good stewardship practices (land, water, air, and biodiversity) to reduce agriculture's impacts on the environment.
- The agriculture industry should be able to expand and operate in an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable manner.
- Land-use plans and management frameworks that encourage or require agriculture practice change should not create a cost burden for agriculture producers.
- Achieving management framework objectives requires realistic timelines for implementation by the agriculture industry.
- Education, awareness, and incentives should be available to assist the agriculture industry in achieving environmental outcomes.
- Emerging agricultural opportunities should be encouraged by the Government of Alberta through research, education, and policy implementation.



# Cumulative Effects Management

- Management frameworks should be thoroughly assessed for unintended consequences to agriculture such as potential loss of industry competitiveness.
- Management frameworks need to be clear about the management actions required by the agriculture industry.
- To remain economically viable, the agriculture industry will require time to develop the capacity to effectively respond to management framework objectives. Improvements will be incremental with measureable change occurring over the longer term.
- Education, awareness, and incentives to encourage the adoption of cumulative effects management practices are preferred by the agriculture industry rather than a regulatory approach.
- Management frameworks for air and water must differentiate between how point and non-point source pollution releases are managed.

# Water Quality and Quantity

- Continued access to safe and reliable water supplies is essential for the agriculture industry to sustain future growth and development.
- Water and land-use policies need to take into account future food production needs and opportunities in response to world population growth and emerging economies.
- To remain economically viable, the agriculture industry will require time to develop the capacity to effectively respond to place-based water quality objectives. Improvements will be incremental with measureable change occurring over the longer term.
- Water quality objectives need to recognize variances in water quality depending on size and origin of rivers and tributaries.
- A flexible water allocation decision-making system is necessary to meet agriculture industry needs and manage the risk of climate variability. To ensure flexibility, water supply management should consider all options including storage, drainage, and distribution.
- Continued efforts by the agriculture industry to increase water conservation, efficiency and productivity are encouraged to achieve future environmental, economic, and social outcomes.
- Decision-makers need timely and accurate information and tools to make informed choices such as continued development of a comprehensive and accurate groundwater mapping database.

# Water Advisory Team

- Developed key messages on priority water issues
  - Water Allocation
  - Wetland Policy



# Water Allocation

- The current allocation system should be upheld as it provides the agriculture industry with certainty and adequate risk management, recognizing there could be opportunities for improvements in the future.
- Within the allocation system, continued flexibility is necessary to meet agriculture industry needs and manage the risk of climate variability. To ensure flexibility, water supply management should consider all options including storage, drainage, and distribution.
- Agricultural producers need to understand how the allocation system works in order to best use the tools available. Educational opportunities should continue to be made available.
- Continued efforts by the agriculture industry to increase water conservation, efficiency, and productivity are encouraged to achieve future environmental, economic, and social outcomes.
- The water allocation system in the province needs to be managed as an integrated system that considers both surface water and groundwater.

# Wetland Policy and Management

- Education, awareness and incentives to encourage wetland protection, conservation and restoration are preferred by the agriculture industry rather than a regulatory approach.
- A wetland policy should have clear outcomes and performance measures and needs to be designed so that all industry sectors are treated equitably and fairly.
- Incentives and programs should be in place to support producers in the protection, conservation and restoration of wetlands.
- Wetlands should be managed in an integrated watershed approach.
- Restoration of prairie wetlands must be voluntary and undertaken in partnership between landowners, municipalities and restoration agencies.

# Ecosystem Services

- Market-based approaches should be voluntary, respect property interests, and provide business opportunities with net financial advantages for agricultural producers.
- Market-based approaches for the provision of ES should:
  - establish clearly defined procedures for market participants;
  - establish fair, science-based, effective, and equitable processes for the valuation and trading of ES;
  - recognize and address if needed, any potential for unintended consequences for the agriculture industry; and
  - be reviewed at least every five years, to ensure the process is reaching its full potential.
- Agricultural producers need access to timely and accurate information, resources and on-farm support to understand how the ES market works, and to identify potential opportunities and risks in order to make informed decisions for their businesses.

# Going Forward

- Continue to build awareness and understanding of agri-environmental issues within the agriculture industry
- Ensure the agriculture industry continues to have a credible voice and play a substantial role in planning and development of agri-environmental policy
- Early and continued engagement with policy makers is critical

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[www.agpartners.ca](http://www.agpartners.ca)

